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***Four Spirits from Maningrida***

**Exhibition opening Saturday 6 December, 2pm**

**Exhibition dates Saturday 6 December – 24 December 2014**

FireWorks Gallery is excited to present *Four Spirits from Maningrida*, our final exhibition for 2014. The art of Maningrida, Arnhem Land is renowned for its spirit figures, often painted on cave walls. It has only been in recent years that the spirit figures have been manifested as sculptural forms in timber and fibre.

The indigenous artists of Maningrida are known for their traditional use of natural materials - dyes and ochres - alongside timeless stories and designs. Maningrida is located along the coast in North-east Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, 400kms east of Darwin.

Four spirits featured in the exhibition are Yawkyawks, Wyarra, Wangarra and Mimih. Yawkyawk, or young spirit girls, are girls who transformed into mermaid-like figures with fish tails. Wyarra/Wayarra are ghostly spirits that can appear as white skeletal forms who float during the night. Wangarra spirits are depicted as distinctive black figure with shimmering white dots. Mimih spirits are beings that existed before humans, and, are credited as teaching the first people of Arnhem Land survival skills including hunting, dancing, singing and painting.

As well as the spirit figures other works included in this exhibition are fish traps, mats and baskets. Ten artists from the Maningrida region have produced these works.

Three senior artists - Lena Yarinkurra, Bob Burrwal and Owen Yalandja - will be present at the exhibition opening, on Saturday 6 December from 2 – 4pm. On this day there will be a unique opportunity from 12 – 2pm to meet the artists, see them at work and hear their stories.

Lena, Bob and Owen are well renowned nationally and internationally, with works held in most state and national collections including the Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, National Gallery of Australia and National Gallery of Victoria. Since 1990, FireWorks Gallery and Maningrida Arts and Culture have worked together closely on various exhibitions and projects. During 2014 a series of Wangarra and Yawkyawk spirit figures have been co-developed. These forms are being cast in aluminium as limited edition sculptures based on original designs by Serena Bonson and Owen Yalandja. These sculptures will be launched in February 2015.

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